

(iii) to revise the original language originating in a foreign country to better conform to customary English usage and style for U.S. patent claiming; (iv) to revise original non-U.S. claim terminology into more appropriate English claim terms having a scope of meaning consistent with the original intended language in preparation for U.S. examination; (iv) to remove limitations having an effect in a foreign country which is different and unintended under U.S. practice (i.e., changing "consisting of" to "comprising"); (v) to remove or amend original claim language that could be regarded as alternative expressions that are acceptable under foreign patent practice but possibly subject to objection under U.S. practice, typically having a broadening or neutral effect in the amended claim; and/or (vi) to improve the clarity or meaning of the original language.

In the case of amendments effectively changing an original claim element expressed as a "means plus function" that could raise a presumption of claim expression under 35 U.S.C. 112, 6th paragraph to a structural expression or to an expression removing the presumption of a "means-plus-function" statement, it is not intended to narrow the claim so amended for purposes of patentability, but rather to place the claim in a form considered to be intended by the applicant from a foreign country where claim limitations described in terms of means-plus-function do not have the same effect as under U.S. practice. Thus, such amendments are intended to establish a full range of equivalents to the claim elements so amended under the U.S. doctrine of equivalents and beyond the range associated with "means-plus-function" expressions according to 35 U.S.C. 112, 6th paragraph, just as if the claim so amended was presented originally in its amended form.

All rights are reserved to the original disclosed and claimed subject matter and any cancellation of claims is made without prejudice or disclaimer.

LIST OF CURRENT CLAIMS

1-34 (Canceled).

35. (New) Skirting board system, comprising board sections having a lengthwise direction and further having a laminated surface on one or more sides, each board section having a length of less than two meters, said board sections being adapted to be mounted successively one after the other to each other in the lengthwise direction.

36. (New) Skirting board system according to claim 35, including coupling devices enabling coupling of the board sections to each other.

37. (New) Skirting board system according to claim 35, wherein the board sections are provided with positioning devices enabling board sections to be at least partially aligned with respect to each other.

38. (New) Skirting board system according to claim 35, wherein the board sections are provided with attachment devices enabling blind seating of the board sections by the mounting of a subsequent adjacent board section.

39. (New) Skirting board system according to claim 35, wherein direct coupling devices are provided on each board section, said coupling devices enabling connection of narrow edge extremities of each board section, said coupling devices comprising first coupling parts substantially in the form of a tongue and a groove enabling well-defined locking in a direction perpendicular to the plane of the board sections, and second coupling parts enabling a well-defined locking in a direction parallel to the lengthwise direction of the board sections; said second coupling parts comprising a first part that can be elastically moved, said first part when moved elastically being movable

transverse to the plane of the respective board section and being disposed at the edge area of the board section on which the tongue is present, and a second part configured to cooperate with said first part, said first and second parts being located in an area located inwardly of a tip of the tongue when adjoining board sections are coupled with said first and second parts coupled to each other.

40. (New) Skirting board system according to claim 39, wherein, said second part is provided on a protruding lip of each board section.

41. (New) Skirting board system according to claim 35, wherein the board sections comprise coupling devices enabling at least a locking of board sections in a lengthwise direction, said coupling devices being formed such that adjoining board sections can be engaged and locked together by at least one of shifting and turning motions.

42. (New) Skirting board system according to claim 41, wherein the board sections have narrow sides including first coupling devices extending parallel to a front side of the board sections and second coupling devices extending parallel to an upper side of the board sections.

43. (New) Skirting board system according to claim 35, wherein the board sections when coupled display a tile pattern, wherein, at the location of each transition between two coupled board sections, an imitation joint is presented.

44. (New) Skirting board system according to claim 43, wherein the configuration of imitation joint is selected from the group consisting of:

- a print;
- an impression;
- a print combined with an impression;

a removed material portion along an edge of the joint ;
a removed material portion in the shape of an inclination or bevel, optionally including a separate decorative layer; and
a difference in the surface structure at the location of the joint.

45. (New) Skirting board, comprising at least two structural parts, including a first structural part forming at least a part of a front side of the skirting board, and a second structural part forming at least a part of an upper side of the skirting board, said structural parts being formed from a laminate material that has been formed under pressure, and having a core and a synthetic material-based top layer provided on said core.

46. (New) Skirting board according to claim 45, wherein said first and second structural parts are formed from a plate-shaped material.

47. (New) Skirting board according to claim 45, wherein said first and second structural parts are made from a similar or one and the same laminate material and show the same pattern.

48. (New) Skirting board according to claim 45, wherein said first and second structural parts have a top layer, and said first and second structural parts adjoin each other with their respective top layers located at least at the level of an outer side of the skirting board.

49. (New) Skirting board according to claim 45, wherein at the location of a corner edge formed by said first and second structural parts, a portion of the material forming the structural parts is removed, and a decorative layer is provided on a surface exposed by said material removal.

50. (New) Skirting board according to claim 45, wherein said top layer is formed of at least one resin-impregnated layer joined to the core by compression.

51. (New) Skirting board according to claim 45, said laminate material of at least one of said structural parts comprising DPL (Direct Pressure Laminate).

52. (New) Skirting board according to claim 45, wherein a top layer of the first and second structural parts is provided with a tile pattern with joints extending over a front side and an upper side of the skirting board.

53. (New) Skirting board, comprising a laminated surface both at a front side and at an upper side thereof, said surface resulting from an operation under pressure, wherein at least one surface comprises a previously formed laminate film, and wherein said laminated surfaces have been subjected to one and the same or a similar finishing treatment.

54. (New) Skirting board, comprising a laminated surface both at a front side and at an upper side thereof, wherein at the edge between the upper side and the front side, an amount of material has been removed, and wherein a surface exposed by such material removal is provided with a decorative layer.

55. (New) Skirting board, comprising at least a first part forming at least a portion of a front side of the skirting board, and a second part forming at least a portion of an upper side of the skirting board, wherein both said first and second parts are formed from the same piece of laminate material having a core and a top layer of the DPL type, and wherein the second part comprises a part from which material is removed from the core, and wherein bringing the first part and the second part together may be carried out by turning said first and second parts towards each other around a folding or breaking line.

56. (New) Skirting board according to claim 55, wherein the second part and the first part are either or both mutually folded around and broken around either or both a folding and a breaking line, said breaking line comprising a weakened material zone that had been formed partially in the top layer.

57. (New) Skirting board according to claim 55, including a post-treated edge between the upper side and the front side.

58. (New) Skirting board according to claim 57, said post-treated edge formed by a surface exposed by the removal of an amount of material, and wherein the exposed surface is provided with a decorative layer.

59. (New) Floor covering system, comprising floor panels and skirting boards, wherein the floor panels are formed of laminated panels with a core and a pressed-thereupon top layer comprising synthetic material, said skirting boards comprising a skirting board sections of the skirting board system according to claim 35, wherein top layers of the skirting board system and of the floor panels are matched to each other.

60. (New) Floor covering system according to claim 59, wherein the top layers are matched to each other in appearance, said skirting boards and floor panels revealing one or more features selected from the group consisting of:

- the skirting boards and the floor panels have been made by a similar manufacturing process;

- the top layers of the skirting boards and floor panels comprise DPL (Direct Pressure Laminate);

- the top layers of the skirting boards and floor panels comprise identical decor layers; and

the top layers of the skirting boards and floor panels are finished in a similar manner, using finishers selected from the group consisting of:

- impressions in the surface;
- impressions in the surface, which are in register with a pattern of a decor layer used in the top layer;
- impressions in the surface, in which a component is provided, comprising either a color component or an active component; and
- treatment of the surface altering a feature of the surface.

61. (New) Floor covering system, comprising floor panels each having at least at two opposed edge areas having coupling elements for enabling coupling such floor panels to each other, said coupling elements comprising coupling parts as recited in claim 39 for coupling skirting board sections.

62. (New) Method for manufacturing skirting boards recited in claim 45, comprising pressing a top layer on a laminate material having a core, said laminate material comprising synthetic material; by means of one or more machining operations, forming said parts out of said laminate material; and connecting said parts directly or indirectly to each other.

63. (New) Method according to claim 62, including the step of starting from pieces of laminate material having coupling devices on two opposite sides such that after the assembly of said parts, coupling devices are created at the extremities of the skirting boards.

64. (New) Method for manufacturing skirting boards recited in claim 55, comprising forming by compression a laminate material with a core and a pressed- thereupon top layer of the DPL type; starting from laths or strips of said laminate material, forming the

skirting boards; removing from at least one longitudinal edge of said laths or strips a portion of material, such that a first part and a second part are formed, wherein both parts remain connected at least by a portion of the top layer; and said parts are turned towards each other while they are joined together and attached to each other.

65. (New) Method according to claim 64, including forming a weakened zone when removing said material such that said material is removed partially from the top layer.

66. (New) Method according to claim 64, wherein, after joining said parts, a post-treatment is performed at the top of an exterior side of the skirting board where said parts adjoin each other.

67. (New) Method according to claim 66, wherein for the post-treatment, at least one process is selected from the group consisting of:

- coloring;
- removing an amount of material at the top of the exterior side of the skirting board where said parts adjoin each other;
- sanding;
- providing a bevel; and
- providing a decorative layer at the edge.